

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

Screened RD 39751
By: NARA Date:
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TO : SAC (157-1838)

DATE: 4/2/69

FROM : SA WILLIAM H. LAWRENCE

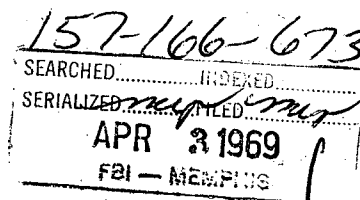
SUBJECT: COMMEMORATION, MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.,
ASSASSINATION, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE
4/4/69
RM

On the late afternoon of 3/26/69 ME 338-R advised that a planning meeting relative to the proposed commemoration of the assassination of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., Memphis, Tenn., 4/4/69, scheduled mass march, was held at the Lorraine Hotel and Motel, 406 Mulberry, Memphis, on the night of 3/25/69, attended by various SCLC leaders, including the SCLC President RALPH DAVID ABERNATHY; O. W. PICKETT and JESSE EPPS, along with some of the local representatives of Community on the Move for Equality (COME), a group of Negro ministers headed by Rev. JAMES MORRIS LAWSON, JR., Rev. EZEKIEL BELL, and H. RALPH JACKSON, Director of Minimum Salary Division,

- 1 - 157-1838
- 1 - 170-70 Sub (ME 338-R)
- 1 - 157-556 (Possible Racial Violence, Major Urban Areas)
- 1 - 157-1067 (Invaders)
- 1 - 157-1423 (BUF)
- 1 - 157-1308 (COME)
- 1 - 157-1516 (AFSCME, Local 1733)
- 1 - 157-1312 (Black Knights)

FOIA(b)7 - (D)

- 1 - 157-1351 (MAURICE LEWIS)
 - 1 - 157-1647 (DONALD PIGFORD)
 - 1 - 100-4528 (CHARLES L. CABBAGE)
 - 1 - 157-1553 (ROY LEE TURKS)
 - 1 - 157-1626 (JOHN CHARLES SMITH)
 - 1 - 157-1745 (CARL S. ARMSTRONG)
 - 1 - 157-1776 (CURTIS DAVIS)
 - 1 - 157-1564 (LOUIS WELCH)
 - 1 - 157-943 (BOBBY DOCTOR)
 - ① - 157-166 (SCLC)
 - 1 - 157-1857 (MARK SIGGERS)
 - 1 - 66-1687 Sub A (Dissemination)
- WHL:gmh
(22)



ME 157-1838

AME Church, and representatives of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Local 1733.

ABERNATHY mainly tried to talk with the various groups to pacify them and unify them and informant stated that actually ABERNATHY seemed to be sincere and seemed to play the part of the legitimate Christian minister.

He stated that earlier on 3/26/69 a planning meeting was held in Clayborn Temple, AME Church, located at 280 Hernando, at which point the 4/4/69 march will originate. Several of the Invaders attempted to get into this meeting but were unable to do so at the outset. Among the leaders at the planning meeting were such people as H. RALPH JACKSON; Rev. JAMES MORRIS LAWSON; MAXINE SMITH who is Executive Secretary NAACP at Memphis; Rev. BEN HOOKS, former Shelby County Criminal Court Judge; Rev. S. BILLY KYLES; and others. At the outset, JACKSON seemed to make a mistake in that he refused admittance to women connected with the group called Women on the Move for Equality Now (WOMEN). He also refused admittance to representatives of the Black Knights, as well as admittance to representatives of the Invaders.

The meeting later developed into nearly a "free-for-all" when some of the Invaders led by MAURICE LEWIS, CHARLES LAVERNE CABBAGE, DONALD PIGFORD, ROY LEE TURKS, and JOHN CHARLES SMITH and others, invaded the meeting and demanded an audience with RALPH DAVID ABERNATHY when ABERNATHY pleaded that he had only ten minutes before having to leave to catch a 1:29 p.m., plane, Delta Airlines, to Chicago. They talked rough to him, threatened to disrupt the march or even prevent its transpiring and according to informant it was apparent that the Invaders are attempting to blackmail the SCLC just as they did during the SCLC National Convention at Memphis, Tenn., in August, 1968.

One of the Invaders made the statement that they were going to go get a gun and come back and disrupt the meeting, although the informant stated this was merely a bluff in an effort to create confusion.

CHARLES CABBAGE interrupted the meeting by saying that the Invaders had 35 of their members who had been jailed in recent months carrying out the work for the black power people and that they had been intimidated to know end by the Memphis Police Department, yet the black leaders represented by those present today had done nothing for "us" (the Invaders).

Informant pointed out that unfortunately none of the leaders present, including JACKSON, HOOKS, and LAWSON, had the guts to confront the Invaders by pointing out that the arrests of their members had all been legitimate arrests on various serious criminal charges. He stated that he, in fact, told Rev. LAWSON that it appeared they were too lenient with the Invaders and the informant feels that these so-called Negro leaders representing COME and the Union and SCLC are actually physically afraid of some of the Invaders.

He stated that PIGFORD, MAURICE LEWIS and CHARLES CABBAGE openly threatened a breach of peace on 4/4/69, indicating that if the SCLC did not see fit to meet with them and meet their demands that they would see to it that Memphis had a good riot on 4/4/69. Informant who knows many of the Invaders personally stated that in his opinion they were merely bluffing and mouthing off although he felt that people such as Judge HOOKS should have called the Invaders to task at that point.

The Black Knights apparently were originally undecided as to what to do but are now in the "middle" in that they were excluded from the meeting and informant feels that some of the Black Knights, not all of them, will form a coalition with the Invaders in an effort to bring pressure to bear on COME, SCLC and Local 1733, AFSCME. Informant pointed out that JESSE EPPS at one point told CABBAGE, PIGFORD and MAURICE LEWIS that after all they should not expect too much in the form of money from the march leaders, because Local 1733 and COME were currently paying their rent and utilities and Phone Bill for the Invaders at their headquarters at 271 Vance Avenue.

In addition to ABERNATHY, SCLC officials, including BERNARD LAFAYETTE, who is the new Coordinator of Activities for SCLC; Rev. JAMES ORANGE, aka "Little Jesus"; and WILLIE BOLDEN were present. Also BOBBY DOCTOR, an employee of the U. S. Civil Rights Commission, Federal Building, Memphis, Tennessee, was present and later went with some of the SCLC staff to the Invaders headquarters, at about 4:30 p.m., in an effort to pacify them. Informant pointed out that the Invaders, headed by LEWIS WELCH, were at the time he talked to the writer in the process of preparing a hate sheet in which they claimed they would denounce RALPH JACKSON, Rev. JAMES LAWSON, and others; would promise to create disruption and possibly riotous situations on 4/4/69; and that informant had learned on good authority that LEWIS WELCH had sent an Invaders member called ARMSTRONG, a recent releasee from jail, to procure photographs of H. RALPH JACKSON and Rev. JAMES LAWSON which they intended to use in putting out a brochure or "throwaway," denouncing these individuals.

Informant added that BOLDEN and BERNARD LAFAYETTE and ORANGE planned to remain in Memphis until the 4/4/69 march in an effort to coordinate the planning thereof but that Rev. ORANGE plans to go to Tuscaloosa, Ala., over the weekend of 3/29-30/69 in order to get married. The identity of his bride-to-be is unknown.

Informant saw the young Negro, former MSU student and former enlistee in the U. S. Navy, MARK SIGGERS, who purportedly is now connected in some capacity with the COME, who was at the Lorraine Hotel on the night of 3/25/69, although SIGGERS did not take any active part in this meeting. Informant stated that he would try to keep abreast of this situation and promptly furnish any pertinent information to this office.

This information has orally been disseminated to Lt. E. H. ARKIN, Intelligence Bureau, Memphis, Tennessee, Police Department.